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CHRISTIANITY SOCIAL.

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.”—2 Cor. iv., 14.

We will leave that passage for the moment, and return to it when we shall come back on the stream of developed truth.

In the lower range of life, we discern only selfish power, without companionship, without respect to anything else—power stored up for self-preservation. What does a lion think of in his soberest moods, but how to get something to eat, that he may be a lion still! What do serpents think of, and alligators, and all the great murderous, cruel, crushing, destroying animals, but how to munch some victim! They go not in societies. They have no intellectual conceptions. The whole world is to them a pasture-ground; and to destroy that they may feed is their necessity. Their being revolves in that circle; and blood is their life.

If you rise a degree higher, you find the element of companionship developing; and birds and animals become gregarious. And although this indicates mildness of temper, and the development of other constituent elements of their being, of a higher order than those of the solitary and the brutal, yet this companionship is one which is maintained simply by the law of violence. The strongest horse rules the herd. Everything falls into its relative order, upon the principle of necessity—scarcely of choice. Nevertheless, animals consort with each other, and under certain circumstances have communal feelings; as when they cluster together to fight a common enemy, or as when, finding food, they in

some mysterious way—birds certainly—make known the tidings to each other. But the range is very narrow, and the development is very small.

By and by we go still higher, and touch the lowest point from which humanity begins to develop. In this there is a marked change. Between the lowest savage and the highest animal there is a space which no philosophy has crossed—a gulf which no reasoning has overpassed. If you conceive of the brute creation as brought up so that it begins to be intelligent of the lower sensibilities and affections of mankind, as in the elephant, in the horse, and in that animal which unquestionably stands nearest to mankind, the dog—for a genuine dog is fit for immortality—if you look even at these very highest specimens of the brute creation, there is still wanting, not simply degree, but kind, quality; and the distance between the lowest humanity and the highest animal is such as effectually estops philosophers. Here begins a new sort. It is very low; it is rude; it is imperfect: nevertheless, here are germ-forms and tendencies which are entirely unknown elsewhere.

If, then, you follow up this development of divine creation, the human race, there are certain great elemental laws which have been gradually unfolded.

How do we know what are God's laws? Sinai never taught us God's great natural laws. Sinai taught men certain rules. They did not rise higher than rules. Beneficent rules and regulations were they. They are out-grown by Christian men; but they are just as necessary for the great basilar mass of mankind now as they were when they were first uttered. They are eternally operative and necessary, because there is an eternity of brute force at the bottom of society to which "Thou shalt not" is as necessary as, to the other extreme, "Thou shalt" is. But there has been no providential disclosure of the constituent elements of the air or of the earth. No providence ever revealed to man, by the word of the Lord, how his body was constructed. No providence ever revealed to him that he had a brain, that he had a heart, that there was blood that circulated in his veins, and that that blood was the feeder of the whole body. No

angelic messengers have taught man that there was evil in poison, insalubrity in climate, or unhealth in various articles of diet. The law of food, and the law of exercise, and the law of carrying one's self in the midst of material things, have been dug out of human experience.

Philosophers, now-a-days, modern scientists, take great pride to themselves because they are prophets of the truth. They scorn many presentations which we make to them, saying, "We are educated to think. We have learned how to discriminate. We throw away the apparent, and keep the real. Do not bring to us empirical matters; we do not believe in them." To hear them talk, you would think that they were the first men on earth; that they knew all things first, and that they were the only ones who had real knowledge.

Now, I do not deny that we owe a great deal to philosophers as such—provided you include among them old women, and nurses, and boys that have stubbed their toes, and learned by the pain which they experienced that it was unwise to stub their toes, and men that have gone into difficult places, and found out by what they suffered that it was not best to go into such places. The human family has been digging away at experience from the earliest periods of the world, and has been undergoing suffering of all sorts. This has been true of every class of mankind, black and white—for black men can suffer as well as white men. The Tartar, the Calmuc, the Chinese, the Ethiopian, the African of every description, the North American savage, and all civilized nations, have been unconsciously busy picking up the great threads of life, a little here and a little there; and the resultant through ages has been knowledge.

If men say, "Empirical methods are not the best by which to investigate truth," I admit that; but if men say, "I won't take empirical knowledge," then I say that the experience of six thousand years is invalid; for the finders out of truth have been largely men who have employed empirical methods. And when such men as Aristotle give systematic forms to knowledge which existed before they gathered it up, they add to it something of that prophecy

which the study of cause and effect enables every man to exercise.

And so the human family has developed itself into a knowledge of divine laws by trying after them,—by snatching at them. In short, suffering, disappointment and mistake have been schoolmasters in all the earlier periods. A thing tasted good and men ate it; and afterward it did not taste good, and they said, “I will never eat it again.” They found out that there was a law there, and they respected it—trying, perhaps, once or twice more, to be sure that there was no mistake.

The method of investigation by which the race have come into certain great paths, and developed regularly in certain great tendencies, has been that they have tried such and such ways, and found them to be failures, and by trying other ways have found them to be successful, and so have said, “These are the rules of happiness.” The process, in their conception, was mechanical; but the next man came and said, “This is a principle.” Then the next man, being a moral teacher, comes and takes this rule or principle, and shows that it stands connected with the great moral government of the world.

These remarks lead me to say that the whole early experience of the human race went to prove that happiness lies in the direction, mainly, of the social impulse—that is, the impulse which draws man to man through kindness and good will. It did not become the law of the realm; it did not become the law of philosophy; it did not become the perceived law of the administration of nations. It was found out that if men were to dwell together, there was no way in which they could dwell together in peace and happiness, except by every one’s consenting to forbear things offensive to the others, and by every one’s throwing in something agreeable to the others. The household very soon was developed. The affections, the affinities, the growing happiness of those households that were self-restrained, as compared with the condition of those households that were self-indulgent; those households where there were parents that loved their children, and sacrificed themselves in love for their children, as compared with those

households where there were parents that let everything run riot, and allowed their children, like wild partridges, to take care of themselves,—these things taught men empirically that the way of happiness in the family was the social way of good will. And very soon families were grouped together in tribes—for there were tribes before there were neighborhoods; and in these tribes the same feeling was developed. It was feeble at first; but at length it began to be the very center of tribal existence and life; and it came to be the law of experience. Family relations, tribal relations, and neighborhood relations, all of them stood on a principle which was not distinctly enunciated or recognized in all its parts, and in its every light as we see it now: nevertheless, there was at the bottom a necessity of which men were conscious, that if they were to be happy they must be happy in certain definite ways or directions; and those ways or directions were that there should be a renunciation, to a great extent, of one's self, and that each man should study things that concerned the peace and happiness of others.

This can be done, usually, with benevolence. A man may say, "I am the smartest man in this crowd; but though I know it, they do not know it: so it won't do for me to bump my head against everybody that I meet; and I am going to hold back. It is true that I am the smartest man that ever was born; but for the sake of policy, I am going to act as though I thought others just as smart as myself." It is not from principle that he acts benevolently: he acts so, he restrains himself, he contributes to the self-respect of others, selfishly, in order that indirectly good may come to himself. He curbs anger, avarice, every impropriety of life, as the best method of seeking his own well-being. He denies himself, and takes up his cross, in order that, making others happy, their happiness may come back to him as a sweet and fragrant wind, and waft his bark on to prosperity.

But the main point is, men find out that violence or disregard of others hurts the man that exercises it, and that the law of peace and good will is a law which is required by the nature of his faculties, and which, when men are brought together in society, impels them to social benevolence.

Well, as you go higher, there is a very singular development of the same principle in regard to national life. The family is a rude thing. The smaller state or province is still ruder. All its methods are rude at best. They are all ragged and imperfect. But the administration of the affairs of nations or empires is immeasurably more imperfect. The weakness of man is shown in proportion as the sphere in which his activity stands is enlarged.

But you will observe one thing—that, in the Oriental monarchies, all that belonged to the monarch's dominion, when once they had submitted themselves to him, were a part of him, and came under the general law of his protection and good will, while those that stood outside of his dominion were regarded as fit for food, to be subjugated and ground up by his power. All who were within the national limit were attended by a kind of rude social kindness which was not granted to others.

Take, for instance, the way in which the Oriental monarchies—the Babylonian, the Chaldean, and the Assyrian—extended their borders further and further. It seems to us to have been an outrage for them to break into the peaceful nations adjoining them. It seems outrageous to us, because now sensibility to wrong, the sense of right, and the conditions of men, are so much higher than they were then. The evil and the cruelty were not as great as we are apt to suppose. We tend to over-estimate such things. When we apply the modern developed standard to the earlier and ruder state of the world, we judge unphilosophically and too severely.

When Assyria took within her own limits a great slice of the adjoining nation, the shock was rude, and full of cruelty; but when once the inhabitants were in, and were counted, and counted themselves, as citizens of that empire, they had all the amenities, all the protection, and all the good will of the Court. Then, when another section was swept in, there was rudeness and cruelty again; but when the people were once in, they were regarded as citizens, and the government extended to them its good will.

So, in this very vague, rude, diffusive way, the law of

imperial social kindness evolved itself; and the rulers of nations were regarded as corrupt who did not consider the welfare of their subjects; and poetry, oratory, and history celebrated the crowns which shone out with a thought for the common people; and those monarchs were called detestable who were cruel and oppressive, and who did not recognize the welfare of the subject.

It was a rude judgment; but did it not show that there was this great underlying tendency, this great organic law of human existence, teaching men that happiness lay in the directions in which men sought each other's welfare?

To be sure, to a certain extent, care for one's self is right. That is to say, there is a fundamental law that a man must look after himself, as a primary condition of being able to look after others. The mother who gives milk to her babe must give food to herself; and yet giving food to herself is not necessarily selfish. There is such a thing as care of one's self that stands preparatory to the care of other people. These two great principles which are concurrent have not been understood or well interpreted.

With this gradual development of the sense of good will as the fundamental law of happiness in a community, there have always been selfishness and cruelty under the form of justice—for of all things that are unjust on earth, nothing is so unjust as justice—as men go.

Now, this slowly developed element had grown until the fullness of time had come, and until the race were prepared to hear our Saviour announce, in the broadest terms, and as a universal principle, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself"—this is the law. The body and soul, the heart and breast of the divine law, to the human race, above and beneath, and on every side, is this; and the seeking by men of the welfare of each other is the fulfilling of it.

But even that disclosure was yet imperfect. It was the law of love which Christ disclosed as the main element of that "stream of tendencies," as Arnold would say, which had pervaded or passed through time; but there was to be an exhibition of it still more emphatic. Christ's death was the

most significant revelation of his life. It gave to humanity this grand idea, not yet comprehended by many, that men must not only live to love, but that love itself is measured by its wasting and by its suffering.

No man can measure love by the pleasure which it gives. No man can measure love by the soul-disturbing throes which accompany its exercise. No man can gauge and estimate love by invisible and bodily conditions. The eternal and everlasting measure of love is, How much will you give of yourself for those whom you love? And Jesus Christ stood upon the threshold of two worlds, and said, "I will give myself, by life and by death;" and he plunged into the darkness of the sepulcher; and with him slept for ages the sublime truth which lay in this act. Love, which is the crown and soul of God; love, which is the law of the universe unseen, and which has been slowly detected by the unfolding of the experience of mankind to be also the social law of human existence and being; love, which teaches us to suffer one for another, yea, and to empty ourselves for others—this is the highest form yet disclosed. There may be higher forms, but they transcend any capacity which we now have.

I do not stand here to raise the question of Christ's divinity. Still less do I stand here to define it. I believe that every one of us holds Jesus Christ to have been in such a sense the representation of God as that his acts interpret the divine nature; but that the divine nature, interpreted by Christ, was that, at the point of love, the very being itself should be given up through all time to suffering for the welfare of another, all have not yet come to see.

You will observe that here the circle completes itself, and that you have made an entire revolution. Life begins at that point where animals take care of themselves by inflicting unmeasured suffering. Animal life builds itself up by preying and destroying. Then you see developed more and more the element of sparing. Then there is the manifestation of kindness within circumscribed limits. Then there is the opening up of social life on the principles of forbearance and affection. Then, through larger disclosures, there is the

growth of refinement and civilization, and the augmentation of human being, and so of that great central power of attraction and gravitation, the principle of doing well to men for one's own sake, and for others'. Then you come at last to the truth that love is the fulfilling of the universal law, and that love suffers rather than permits suffering—that the divine nature is such that it will suffer itself rather than allow others to suffer. And then, at once, you perceive that we stand facing in exactly the opposite direction from that in which we faced in the beginning. In the beginning it was, "I am happy because I have strength, and because I have enough to eat." Going on from that, it was, "I am happy, not only by reason of my power, but because with my power I am mild and good-natured." Going on still further, it is, "I am happy because I exercise my power both with reference to myself, to make myself happy, and also with reference to others to make them happy." Going on further yet, it is, "I am not at liberty to seek my happiness by withdrawing happiness from others." And at last we find ourselves facing in directly the opposite way from that in which we faced at first, and saying, "I am to find my happiness by suffering that others may be happy." In the beginning the law was, "Let others suffer that I may be happy;" and in the end the law is, "Let me suffer that others may be happy, and so I shall be abundantly happy." Has there not been a perfect transformation—a complete revolution?

I shall not now go into the question that arises in the minds of most persons in this congregation as to how this theory can be reconciled with the drama of life itself, with its diseases, with its sicknesses, with its plagues, and with its sufferings. I recognize your right to raise the question, and I will perhaps make it the subject of a sermon some time; but I shall not discuss it this morning. It is proper for you to interpolate the general fact of a difficulty here; but we will pass over it at this time.

Now, having come down in our line of thought to this point, am I transcending the fair province of reasoning by analogies when I say that Christianity is a system founded essentially on this grand central principle of love, that its

nature is social, that its very impulse is the creating of such intelligence and purity and obedience and love through the individual, the community, the church and the race as shall make them all happier? Is not that the interior idea of Christianity? It is; and so far from its being a system of seclusion, so far from its being a system of intense selfishness which leads a man to say, "Let me get out of the world, that I may be so pure that I can get to heaven"—so far from that, its very necessity and genius demands that a man shall live in the world, and that he shall contribute to this grand, universal, central element of social benevolence.

I will not say that a man may not be a Christian and at the same time a monk or a hermit. I can conceive that a man studying in a monastery may say, "I cannot personally do much for my kind; but I can write books that will do more than I can personally." Men may be secluded from mankind and yet think that they are working in the best way in their power for their fellows, and therefore I do not speak uncharitably of them; but the monarchic idea, that heaven is best sought by those who keep away from mankind in order to keep their garments pure and spotless, is contrary to the genius of Christianity. The idea is that a man shall stand where his birth put him, in the providence of God, and effloresce there; that he shall take all the labor, all the cares and responsibilities, which God has laid upon him, and bear them bravely, and wisely, and rightly, and make his whole force a contribution to the welfare of those who are nearest to him, in circles that grow wider and wider to the uttermost, till all mankind are included in the sphere of his benevolence.

The spirit of Christianity is social, the genius of Christianity is social, and it works accordingly.

Now, when we come down to the thought of dying—for I am coming home again pretty nearly to my text—it is remarkable, you will observe, how blindly this strong social element is set forth in the Old Testament, and yet how real it was in the Old Testament conception of life and death. It is perfectly certain that, so far as the text of the Old Testament scripture is concerned, there was no revelation,

no dogmatic authoritative declaration, made of the future existence ; and it is equally evident that in the minds of the writers of the Old Testament a belief in existence after death was not uncommon. It is evident that men of high moral natures and of intuition saw it, and interpreted it ; but it was no part of the teaching of the Mosaic economy. There was not a word about it in that. From first to last, there were no declarations on this subject. There was nothing like this : If you sin you shall fail of the life to come. The promises were these : If you obey, your days shall be long in the land which the Lord your God has given you ; if you are obedient your fields shall be fruitful, your herd shall increase, you shall plant, and drink the wine of your vineyards, and eat the fruit of your labor ; but if you are disobedient you shall sow and another shall reap—you shall plant and another shall have the harvest. All through the Old Testament there are promises of temporal blessings, but not of future or spiritual rewards. But although, in the ancient economy and forms of religion, there was no recognition of the other state, we perceive distinctly that the more eminent saints of the old dispensation believed in it. It was peculiar to their personal experience. He died, and was gathered to his fathers ; he was a shock of corn, ripe, and borne to the granary of God,—such mute and inarticulate passages are very touching to me, as the language of a child often is.

The Hebrews' conception of the other life was borrowed very largely from the physical condition which surrounded them. They lived in a limestone country, where all manner of caves abounded. These caves were the earlier sepulchers. The stone was soft, and they hollowed out oven-like places, and into these they shoved coffins with the remains of those that died. Channels or berths were made, where these coffins were placed in continuous rows. And their imagination worked in connection with these things, and their idea was augmented until they had what they conceived to be a kingdom of darkness or of death,—a great kingdom where, in semi-consciousness and in half sleep, beyond the sound of the thunder of life, and beyond the influence of men, in a sort of gelatinous placidity, men dwelt

together. They formed a society. Men did not die to be blown with the dust every whither. Men, dying, were not annihilated. To their thought, men, dying, were not separated from each other by the clod or the soil, but were gathered into a great slumberous chamber of half consciousness. They were "gathered to their fathers," one after another. What meaning the Hebrew child gave to this expression we cannot tell. We were brought up to speak differently. What were the mother's thoughts who bade farewell at the mouth of the sepulcher to that which was more to her than herself, we cannot tell. When Elisha went up toward Carmel, the woman who had given him shelter and food, and whose house had been his home, sent forward her servant to call him quickly, as her child was sick; and as he came up, meeting her, he asked, "Is it well with the child?" and she said, "It is well." That is all that passed between them; but, what an orb of feeling there was in that mother's heart! She did not believe that that child was annihilated. It was dead, but it was not dead. And so there were strange and wondering thoughts of life in death that clustered round about the sepulcher, among the people of God during the old dispensation; but we cannot solve or explain them.

When Christ came, however, life and immortality were brought to light; and now see how, already, it was not special to him. It had become part and parcel of the belief of the nation, although there was a class of men who did not believe in resurrection or the life to come. The Sadducees, the wealthy class, those that were educated, and for the most part self-indulgent men of the world, said, "Well, we know what we see, but nobody knows what he does not see." Men who love good wine and good beef, and enough of them; men whose eyes stand out with fatness; men who sleep well, and wash well, and eat well, and ride well, and have every comfort, and enjoy physical life through every fiber—they say, "We do not know anything but what we see or feel." There are many men who do *not* know any more than they see or feel.

Such were the Sadducees, and men who walked in velvet, that said, "This world is good enough for us; we do not

want any better world ;” and all outside of them were crying and groaning and suffering ; but they did not look out for them. Their table was large ; they had all that heart could wish ; and they said, “ We are satisfied with this world.” But all the rest of the Jews believed in a certain immortality ; and Christ brought it to light. It was not free from doubt ; it was a subject of dispute in the schools ; it was a question of personal faith, largely, and those who were constituted one way believed it, while those who were constituted another way did not believe it ; and yet, Jesus stamped it as a fact, and brought it not only to light, but to *life*. He held it up as the center of human thought and hope, and as a light by which they were through the night and darkness of time to steer. Humanity beheld its horizon swept on to infinity by the word of the Lord. Man was here ; but he was destined to another world above. Here he was in a nascent condition, but there he should be perfect and regnant. But if only the good could inhabit that other world, who was good ? and how terrible was dying ! The sting of death was sin, and the strength of sin was the law ; and if men that had sinned under the law died, what would become of them ? Round about the portal of death there hovered just the same dark clouds which gather and brood over the exit of life to us.

Now, what was the teaching of Christ ? and what did the apostles understand to be the genius of that teaching ? See how there struck through the whole literature of the New Testament a new element of representation. Where can you find in that literature one single discourteous allusion to death ? There is neither ghastly skeleton, nor bone, nor dust, nor dirt, nor slime, nor anything of the sort associated with dying, in the language of our Saviour, or in the language of the apostles who interpreted him.

Well, what is dying ? If it is spoken of to those who have faith in Christ, it is “ falling asleep in Jesus.” Oh, that men could get back again from their long wanderings on this subject to the joyousness of that level at which it started in the mind of Christ and his immediate successors ! Dying is blessedness. As to the act itself, brethren, there is

not a man that has the toothache all day long who does not suffer more, a hundred times, than a man ordinarily suffers in dying. There is not a woman that has neuralgia through a single night of wakefulness who does not suffer unspeakably more than one suffers in dying. As a general thing, it does not hurt one to die, any more than it hurts a bird to lift itself above the branch and fly singing through the air, or any more than it hurts an apple, in the silence of the dewy night, when it is ripe and has begun to let go of the stem, to fall to the ground. The difference between the sunlight and the dew is enough to detach it, and it falls, and there is no suffering. Dying is not usually hard. The cases are exceptional where it is hard. The reasons of hard dying are artificial and mostly abominable. For the most part, the going out of life is peaceful. The gate where men come into life, and where parents and friends stand with smiles and congratulations, is a gate of pain and groans. The mother-gate is a sorrow-gate, and the child's birth is a birth of cries and tears; but the gate at which men go out of the world is a gate that, on this side, is silent and smooth; and this life melts into the other as the night melts into the morning, when no man can say, "It is night," or, "It is morning." Such is the present state of existence to him who has faith, and a sense of the value of himself, and therefore an insight into what he shall be in the life to come. And what a comfort is this thought of dying! How inexpressibly sweet it is to believe that no man goes to heaven because he is good, but that the best man that ever lived throughout this broad creation goes to heaven because God is good.

Did you never hear a trembling virgin speaking of some great heart that had loved her, and saying, in that most humble of all experiences, the experience of being loved, "I am full of wonder that he loves me"? Yes, that is the character of love. It was out of the greatness of his nature, according to her conception, that he loved her, and not because there was that in her which was as great as he, and which had shone upon him, and compelled him to love her. Greatness loves down as well as up. And no creature will ever stand before God in the day of judgment, or at any

period, and say, "I have lived on earth so that I am fit for heaven." There, in other language than ours, with variations of sweetness, and with transcendency of conception, every soul will say, "By thy grace, dear God, I am where I am." Christianity takes away from men all thought of their desert of bliss in the world to come; and it gives to them at the gate of death the feeling that God is all that they need for going.

But look at the social element :

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

I go and bring, on Easter morning, hundreds of bright flowers to celebrate the rising of my Lord; and they indicate the wish and thought of my heart to celebrate him. I see that Christ is helping us every one, and I look upon the poor; and there is not a ragged boy in the street, there is not a miserable urchin that "sauces" me as I go to the ferry, that my heart does not yearn toward him. He does not know any better than to do as he does; but he is the Lord's child. The men who are the wickedest, and who are the wickedest to me, I look upon, and say, "What am I that I should not look upon them, as God looks upon me, with compassion, and sorrow, and willingness to suffer for them, if I can do them any good?" I give alms and sympathy to men, knowing that in so doing I make a gift to Christ. He stands behind every weeping soul. Jesus is not far from every distressed orphan. He is near to every widow who is oppressed in the hour of her trial. He is with every prisoner. He remembers all that are children of weakness and want. For those who are captive in the Babylon of vice, for those who are confined in the old Roman inquisitorial dungeon of crime, there is a Christ; and I am bringing gifts to him in serving any of these; and at last, when I can do no more, I will bring to thee one final gift, O Jesus! I will bring myself—my soul. It is all that I can give. And I shall be taken by the hand of the Saviour, and received into his kingdom. Whether we live, we live not to ourselves; and whether we die, we die not to ourselves: living or dying, we are the Lord's.

Well, as if that were not enough, see how exquisitely delicate this gentlemanly Book is. See what comfort it affords to those who are anxious as to whether or not they shall know their friends in heaven. That there are those who are thus anxious, I know. It is a fact with which I am brought face to face every week of my life, in the troubles of those who come to me for counsel. "Shall I know my husband? Shall I know my child? Shall I know the dearest friend that I ever had on earth?" O, you that are rich in friends, you do not know what sorrow is, even in the loss of your beloved; for there are many in this life who have but a single friend. There are some who have no child that runs out to greet them when they come home, or but a single child. There are some who have no one to care for them but some kind friend in the neighborhood; and when that friend dies the world to them is empty. All that for which the heart hungers and which it needs more than anything else, is gone. The only child and the only solace of the mother is taken away, and she sorrows over her loss, and every footfall on the threshold is a perpetual trumpet calling back joys that have departed. And when thus all of life is a dirge, one says, "Oh! I could bear it, if I only knew that in a short time I should surely meet that dear one"— for the first shock of grief is always skeptical, or is apt to be, and we work our way up to confidence and faith gradually. At first, sorrows are not joyous but grievous; but they work out the fruit of righteousness. The early experience of grief is that of doubting, and the cry of the bereaved one often is, "Why was I disbranched and uprooted? Why did the stroke come on me? Why were not those children that were brought up to damnation by wicked parents taken, instead of my children that were brought up for salvation?" People who are stripped bare in this world need some light from the other side.

Now, hear Paul saying:

"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also, by Jesus, and shall present us with you."

When that blessed hour of blushing immortality comes, you will be presented with those whom you love. You shall

find your children. O lover! thy beloved will be by thy side. O friend! thou shalt not be friendless. This social law, this secret that dawned early but imperfectly, that waxed stronger, that spread out wider, that developed most completely in the time of Christ, and that then gave form and figure to all representations of life and death and immortality—this glorious sociality and indissoluble bond by which he that has loved once loves forever, if he has loved with the higher nature—this truth comes to every one that stands looking wistfully into the heavens.

Be not alarmed. Your loved one that has gone before has not gone to be a part of the universe, simply. He has not gone to be a mere particle of the ethereal future. He has not gone into some altitude or sphere that is incommunicable to you. What are the precise conditions and limitations that he is under, I do not know; but this I know, that when I go to appear before God in Zion, I shall be presented with you—with you whom I have baptized; with you for whom I have prayed; with you to whom I have preached; with you from whom I have received the sacred fire of love and faith; with you for whom I have suffered; with my children who are waiting for me; with those that are with me; with all whom I have labored with. Not only shall I be presented to God with them, but I shall know them, and they shall know me; and they, and you, and I, and all of us, with ecstatic joy for which there is neither language nor thought in this life, shall bow ourselves before the All-lovely, and say, “Not unto us but unto thy name, be the praise and the glory.” *Amen.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

THOU, O God, art not sitting in eternal serenity; nor is eternal peace thine; for love is in thine heart; and in love is sympathy; and all that mourn and are sorrowful throughout the realm are ever before thee; and thou art their Comforter and their Enlightener; and such solicitude is with thee as love gives forth. Not with pain, and yet with care and with great burden, dost thou carry men forward, though thou art infinite in strength and enduring through the ages, unwearied, without shadow of turning. We rejoice to believe, though we cannot comprehend the feeling, that what we have learned in the household, that the care which love doth bestow upon the feeble and the unknowing, that the solicitude which has its own reward, that the pain which blossoms into gladness, and which we have learned as parents in the bringing up of our offspring—we rejoice to believe that these are the faintest beams of that light which in thee shines as a sun, unwasted and unwasting, pouring forth throughout the vast realms of the universe life and joy through sorrow and imperfection. We aspire to that same light. We long to have such resources in ourselves. We yearn for such a subjection of every thought and feeling to the Lord Jesus Christ as shall make us, like him, one who goes about doing good, and who measures love and goodness by suffering unto the end, and yielding his very life a ransom for many. Vouchsafe to us a sense of thy greatness, not of thine hand, compelling storms, and moulding and sending forth globes. Grant to us a sense, not of thy wisdom, piercing all things before they exist, making them what they are, ruling and marshaling them by thy will, and commanding all things unto obedience—grant to us, not this, but an understanding of the glory of God. May we understand that sphere where the warmth of the universe is. May we understand those elements out of which have sprung all sweet affections in men and angels. May we understand thine infinite, various, unspeakable goodness.

O Lord our God, may we rejoice in thy nature. And we beseech thee that we may more and more be brought under thine influence, transcending all experience, for which we have but the dimmest symbols. May we, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, be lifted up to see somewhat as did thy servants of old—thine apostles and holy men; they who yielded their life as martyrs; they to whom were opened the heavens and the glory of God. Grant that in distress, in bereavement, in care, in labor overmuch, in all the distemperatures of human life, and in all the evolutions of human affairs, we may be able to lift ourselves up, and behold the God that is the God of glory, the God of wisdom, the God of goodness, the God of power, above all things, controlling all things, and showing in the stormiest sky and along the most convulsed ground the tokens of his will, whose counsels are from eternity, and who shall stand unto eternity, the ever-living and unchangeable God.

Grant, we beseech thee, that so we may walk, not as those that tread upon quicksands, nor as those that go down on the rush-

ing stream, nor as those that are benighted, lost in the wilderness, or entangled in labyrinths. May we be the children of God; and if it be in prison at midnight, may our prayers and hymns be heard; or if it be in the daytime and in freedom, may we rejoice in the clear shining of the light which our Sun of Righteousness doth make.

We beseech thee, O Lord our God, for that which we need. We beseech thee for the forgiveness of our sins. We beseech thee for thy care and presence still with us in all our life—though we know that it will be; for thy goodness outruns all our thought of need, and thou dost not walk in the places in which we walk, and thou dost not give according to the little measure of our souls. Thou art giving as the sun doth give, not taking account of things, but pouring forth quantities immeasurable of that which is in thee over all things homely or beautiful, high or low. O Lord our God, we know that thou wilt bless us according to thine own self, and we shall stand in the place of thoughtful love, and shall be overwhelmed with the glory of thy presence. We beseech thee that thou wilt therefore when we ask for the forgiveness of our sins, and for thy continual presence and providence, permit us to plead with thee for our sake because it does us good; because there is this need in us, if not in thee. It brings us nearer to thee. It breaks up the continuity of thy blessings, and they seem like special gifts. It reaches to our want and our cry. And so we are at thy feet—we that are in the bosom of thy love; so we plead upon our knees—we that are sin-sick and that long for eternity, because it helps us. Thou art benign and dost permit it; and thou dost not reject us because we are disfigured; and thou dost adapt thyself to the imperfectness of our ways of asking. As reverent parents look with rejoicing upon their children though they are imperfect, so thou dost look with pleasure upon us though we are imperfect. And we beseech thee that thou wilt give us more liberty before thee, more confidence and more trust. We are ashamed that, while mariners upon the sea do never distrust their compass, we distrust thee. They know by the stars and by the courses of the sea where they are and what they should do, and are at rest even amidst storms, and more in calm.

Oh, grant that we who have been touched with the regenerating power of thy Spirit, and are lifted up from the condition of slaves into the relationship of sons of God, may have more confidence in thee than men have in brute things and in things inanimate. We beseech of thee that we may so walk day by day that men may see that we have invisible strength, and invisible food, and joys that come through channels that are invisible; and may they themselves desire the same faith and the same hope, and find the same blessed Saviour.

Grant to each one in thy presence, this morning, that which he needs of grace, of strength, of inspiration, of hope, of courage, of clarity of vision out of the midst of doubts. Grant that every one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness may find heavenly food. Oh, speak to distressed consciences, and give them quiet through illumination.

We pray that thou wilt grant to all the households that are represented in this church and congregation more grace and more peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We beseech thee that thou wilt bless those who are strangers among us. We are all strangers and pilgrims upon this earth; and yet all of us are of one household—the household of faith; and so may a home feeling come this morning with the blessing of God to all that are comparative strangers here. Go with their thoughts, as upon wings that fly, to hearts far off, and bear blessings of God to them.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant the nearness of thy Spirit, the presence of thy Spirit, and the consolation of thy Spirit, to those who are mourning for friends departed, or for great calamities and overthrows. Grant to every one the grace to behold this whole life as but a fleeting show. May we discern that the true realm, and the only place where there is substance, is the invisible life above. And so, though the outward man perish, let the inward man be renewed day by day.

We pray for the ignorant, and for all who are seeking to enlighten them. We pray that knowledge may go forth with virtue. May the nations of the earth be brought nearer together by that bond of sympathy which now unites so many hearts. May they not look upon each other crouched as wild beasts ready for the spring, but may they discern in each other, brethren; and may that brotherhood breathed from heaven become universal; and may all nations grow and thrive in a peace founded upon justice and truth and purity.

Let thy kingdom come, and let thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT unto us, our dear Father, the power of death to help us to live steadily and mildly. Tell us of the world that is beyond. We beseech thee to teach us that life shall be immortal. And then may we not concern ourselves, nor fret, as to the how or the why God shall work in our behalf, but rest in the sublime trust that he who has made us, and guided us thus far, will order all things aright, so that when we behold him in the other life we shall break out into rapturous transports of joy.

Grant us this faith through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory forever. *Amen.*

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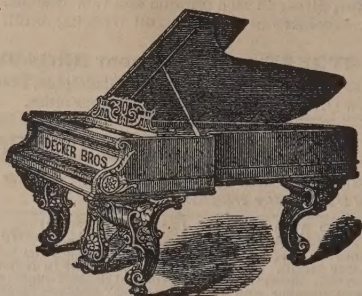
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